Foodgrain production

27. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Development Council has submitted a report to the Prime Minister pointing out that per capita foodgrain production has reached the levels of 1970s and has raised concern for food security;

(b) whether in the report, it has been pointed that in the last decade there has been a sharp deceleration in Indian agriculture with the growth rate in the sector slipping from 3.62 per cent during 1984 to 1995-96 to less than 2 per cent in the period 1995-96 to 2004-05; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to meet the food security?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) In the 53rd meeting of National Development Council (NDC) held on 29th May, 2007, the Prime Minister in his address has referred to the circulation of the report of NDC's sub-committee on Agriculture and Related Issues. He also mentioned directing the Planning Commission to come out with proposals and plan.

The Planning Commission in its Agriculture Strategy for the Eleventh Plan expressed concerns on food security due to per capita foodgrains production reaching the 1970s level and the deceleration in Indian agriculture. It, however, indicates that this has been offset to some extent by increase in per capita availability of other food products and also recognizes existence of a large potential for raising output with effective dissemination of technology.

The NDC in the said meeting has reaffirmed its commitment to achieve four per cent annual growth in the agricultural sector during the Eleventh Plan. The Government has announced a Food Security Mission covering wheat, rice and pulses.

Food security

28. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that food security is coming under renewed strain with growing shortfalls in foodgrains and vegetables;

(b) if so, the details of production and requirement of foodgrains during the last two years; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that private companies have started to purchase foodgrains directly from the farmers at a much higher than the rate fixed by Government and if so, how much purchase these companies have made, so far, and at what rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) India's food security system is acknowledged to be one of the largest in the world. Total foodgrains production in the country increased from 208.60 million tonnes in 2005-06 to 216.13 million tonnes (Fourth Advance Estimates) in 2006-07. As per latest data, production of vegetables has increased from 101.43 million tonnes in 2004-05 to 108.21 million tonnes in 2005-06.

On the basis of the per capita quantities of consumption reported in the National Sample Survey Organisation's 61st Round (2004-2005) Report and the Population Projections given by the office of the Registrar General of India, the requirement of foodgrains, including seed, feed and wastage is estimated at 180.05 million tonnes in 2005-06 and 182.65 million tonnes in 2006-07.

(c) With the amendment of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act for deregulation of the marketing system, the farmers now have more options to sell their produce to the prospective buyers. If the market price is more than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) fixed by the Government, farmers are free to realize a higher price by selling their produce in the open market. As a result, the prices in the market during the harvesting season also are ruling above the MSP and benefiting the farmers.

As per the latest information available large private companies such as Cargill, ITC, Adani Enterprises, Britania, Delhi Flour Mills, Agricore, Sri Nangali Agro and AWB India together have declared purchase of around 18.15 lakh tonnes of wheat in Rabi Marketing Season 2007-08.

National Guarantee Act

29. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Guarantee Act is under active consideration of Government; and

(b) whether it would be possible to provide 100 per cent crop insurance coverage to farmers in view of suicides of farmers by this Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Probably, Hon'ble Member has referred to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which was enacted on 7.9.2005. It does not provide Crop Insurance coverage to farmers.

Integrated and holistic approach for better yields

30. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that agriculture sector needs an integrated and holistic approach and not a fragmented one;

(b) whether Government are also aware that there are gaps between actual yields and the yields that are technologically feasible as these yields increase potential which vary from 40 per cent and 100 per cent; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken at the Central and State level to make a visible impact in the next three to four years in the agriculture sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are gaps between actual yield obtained and that are technologically feasible. The yield increase potential varies from crop to crop. In the recently conducted frontline demonstrations on pulses, oilseeds, rice, wheat and cotton where different